

## **New Life in Christ**

### **Lesson 22: Managing Our Finances**

**Key Verse:** *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* Matthew 6:33

**The Lord Jesus had much to say about money and the proper use of it. He taught us that we are not to over-emphasize the importance of money, but He also taught us that we are not to under-emphasize its importance. In this lesson we want to learn some of the principles in the Bible concerning money and possessions.**

#### **Three Great Principles**

**Before we consider** the matter of how a Christian should manage his finances, let us look at three great principles regarding money and possessions.

##### **1 - God owns everything.**

The first great principle regarding money and possessions is this: God owns everything. The Bible makes it clear that this world, and everything in it, belongs to God. God is the one who created all things; therefore, all things belong to Him. The Bible says,

*"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fulness, the world and those who dwell therein." Psalm 24:1*

God claims universal ownership of everything in the world. He is also specific about it. God says,

*"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:8*

*"For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills...For the world is Mine, and all its fulness." Psalm 50:10,12*

We must never forget that God is the true owner of all things. We may possess things, but God owns them. David recognized God's ownership of all things. He said, *"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all."* 1 Chronicles 29:11

##### **2 - All things come from God.**

The second great principle regarding money and possessions is this: All things come from God. Not only does God own all things, but all that we receive comes from Him. David said,

*"Both riches and honor come from You." 1 Chronicles 29:12*

We may earn our money by hard work, but it is God who gives us strength to work. The Bible cautions us against forgetting God and saying in our heart,

*"MY power and the might of MY hand have gained me this wealth." Deuteronomy 8:17*

God's Word says,

*"You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth..."*  
*Deuteronomy 8:18*

### **3 - We and all that we have belong to God.**

The third great principle regarding money and possessions is this: We and all that we have belong to God.

We belong to God by creation. The Bible says,

*"It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." (Psalm 100:3)*

We also belong to God by redemption. The Bible says,

*"What? do you not know that...you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

Since we ourselves belong to God, then all that we have also belongs to Him. David recognized this principle also. After personally giving an exceedingly costly gift for the building of the temple, he said,

*"...all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You." 1 Chronicles 29:14*

When I recognize that all I have belongs to God and I commit it all to Him, I am freed from anxious care. It is God's property, not mine, and He can take care of it much better than I can.

### **What the Bible Teaches regarding Money**

God gives some specific commands regarding money and how we are to handle it. Let us consider some of them.

#### **● Do not go into debt.**

God does not want His people to be in debt. The Bible says,

*"Owe no man anything, but to love one another..." Romans 13:8*

Any time we go into debt, we lose some of our freedom. The Bible says,

*"The borrower is servant to the lender." Proverbs 22:7*

Many times God calls people to serve Him, but they are unable to do so because of debts.

#### **● Do not strive to be rich.**

The love of money has destroyed more people than perhaps any other one thing.

The Bible says,

*"The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:10 (NKJV)*

You do not have to be rich to love money. Often those who have the least of it love it most. The Bible cautions us against quick and easy ways to get rich. Dishonest men often use get-rich quick schemes to steal money from trusting people. The Bible says,

*"Greedy people try to get rich quick but don't realize they're headed for poverty." Proverbs 28:22 (NLT)*

- **Do not hoard money.**

Every Christian should save some money out of what he earns so that he may have something for emergencies. But we are not to hoard money. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, said,

*"Here is a misfortune on earth that I have seen: Wealth hoarded by its owner to his own misery." Ecclesiastes 5:13 (NET Bible)*

Jesus urges us to lay up treasure in Heaven rather than lay up treasure on earth. He said,

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19 & 21 (NKJV)*

- **Do not make money your god.**

We cannot serve God and, at the same time, make money our goal in life. Jesus said that it is impossible to serve God and money. Our Lord said,

*"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (money)." Luke 16:13*

The Bible warns us again and again of the danger of money. Jesus called it *"the mammon of unrighteousness"* because money is part of Satan's unrighteous world system, and it so often leads people away from God. The Bible says,

*"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 Timothy 6:9 (NKJV)*

Money gives people a sense of power and importance, but it offers no real security. The Bible says,

*"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches..." 1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJ)*

In 1921, nine of the world's most successful money-making business men got together at the Edgewater Hotel in Chicago. They included the head of the greatest monopoly, the most successful speculator on Wall Street, the president of the largest independent steel company, the president of the largest utility company, the president of the largest gas company, the greatest wheat speculator in the United States, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, the president of the Bank of International Settlements, and a member of the president's cabinet.

Twenty-five years later, where were these men of fantastic wealth and power?

Ivar Krueger, head of the greatest monopoly, died of suicide. Jessie Livermore, the most successful speculator on Wall Street, died of suicide. Charles Schwab, president of the largest independent steel company, died in bankruptcy. Samuel Insull, the president of the greatest utility company, died penniless, a fugitive from the law in a foreign land. Howard Hopson, president of the largest gas company, went insane. Arthur Cotton, the greatest wheat speculator died abroad, bankrupt. Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Exchange, was convicted of fraud and went to Sing Sing Penitentiary. Leon Fraser, president of the Bank of International Settlements, died of suicide. Albert Fall, a member of the president's cabinet, went to prison for wrongdoing and was finally pardoned from prison so he could die at home.

These men centered their lives on money. When it was gone, they had nothing to live for. Rather than putting our trust in "*uncertain riches*," we are to put our trust in "*the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy*." (1 Timothy 6:17)

### **Managing Money Wisely**

A principle regarding money which is emphasized in the Bible is this: *If we are wise in handling small amounts of money, God will entrust us with more.* (See Matthew 25:14-30)

To manage your money properly, you don't ask where it went: you tell it where to go.

**Let us consider some practical ways of handling money wisely.**

- **Have a budget.**

Many people are careless with their money. They spend it and say, "*Where did it all go?*" The way to avoid this is to have a budget and keep a record of all expenses.

- **Set aside money for emergencies.**

In every family there are always those times when things go wrong and emergencies occur. Perhaps it is an unexpected car expense or medical bill. By regularly putting something aside for emergencies, these unexpected bills can be met without wrecking your budget.

- **Avoid over-extended credit buying.**

We must not accept the "*Buy now—pay later*" philosophy of the world. When credit is too easily obtained, it is easy to incur so many debts that payments cannot be made.

- **Distinguish between needs and "wants."**

God has promised to meet all our needs, but He has not promised to meet all our "*wants*." We must distinguish between the two. We should buy things for their usefulness, not for their "*status*," or just because we want them.

- **Avoid impulse buying.**

Often we see something we want and buy it before we have considered whether or not we can afford it. This mistake can be avoided by following the "*delayed action rule*."

What is the "*delayed action rule*"? It is this: Do not make a purchase of any size under the pressure of sales talk. When the salesman has finished his talk, just say, "*Thank you. I will let you know my decision within a day or so.*" This allows you time to think about the matter and to make a decision away from the pressure of the sales talk.

- **Pay bills on time.**

Prompt payment of bills is honoring to the Lord. It gives you a good name and a good credit rating. It is a good witness to unsaved people.

- **Live on what God provides.**

God has promised to provide what we need, but He has not promised that we will live in great abundance. Every Christian should learn to live on what God provides and not be under pressure because of a desire for wealth or material things. The Apostle Paul learned to live in contentment whether he had little or much. Paul said,

*"...I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know both how to be abased (to live on almost nothing), and I know how to abound (to live when I have much)..."* Philippians 4:11-12



**SPECIAL WARNING: Do not co-sign notes.**

Six times in the book of Proverbs, God warns us against being "*surety*" for another person's debts. Today we call this "*co-signing*." When we co-sign a note with someone, it means that we are assuming responsibility for the payment of that debt. If for some reason the other person does not pay the debt, then we must pay it. We should not co-sign someone's note because God plainly tells us not to do it. The Bible says,

*"Don't agree to guarantee another person's debt or put up security for someone else."* Proverbs 22:26 (NLT)

Many people have learned through sad experience that when they tried to help a friend by co-signing his note, they ended up losing both their money and their friend.

### **How to Get Out of Debt**

A Christian should handle his finances in a way that is honoring to the Lord Jesus. To have past-due bills and unpaid debts is a poor testimony and dishonoring to the Lord.

Most people who are in debt think that what is needed to get them out of debt is more income. But the answer is not as simple as that. Some people have little money and go into debt, and when they receive more income, they go deeper into debt.

Getting free financially requires right attitudes and right actions. There must be an intense desire on your part to be out of debt. You must believe that it is the will of God for you to be out of

debt. Whatever the will of God is for you can become a reality in your life. Here are some steps that will help you gain financial freedom:

### **1 - List your unpaid bills and debts.**

For each debt, list the company, bank, or person you owe, along with the address, the name of the person you should contact about the debt, and the amount due. Be sure to list every debt.

### **2 - Analyze your current budget.**

List all necessary expenses in order of importance. List only those things which are actual needs. Do not list things which you can do without. Determine the amount you have left over after necessary expenses. This should be applied to your debts on a regular basis.

Keep in mind this fact: You may have money on hand, but if you owe someone else, the amount that you owe is not rightfully yours. It belongs to the person you owe.

### **3 - Decide on the payments you can make to each creditor.**

Determine to pay each creditor something regularly until the debt is paid. Some bills will require larger monthly payments than others. Decide on the maximum payment you can make to each creditor on a regular basis. Once your list is made, put a date by each debt to indicate when you plan to have that debt paid in full. Your plan should represent an earnest and sincere effort on your part to meet your obligations.

In order for your plan to work, you will need to stop any expenditures not essential for living. Discontinue credit buying. Pay for things as you get them. Keep a written record of what you spend so that you know exactly where your money is going.

### **4 - Present your new payment plan.**

Talk personally with each creditor. Explain your situation and show him your plan. Ask for his agreement with your plan for paying the debt you owe him.

It is important that you keep your word and do what you promise to do. If for any reason you are unable to make a payment on time, be sure to notify the creditor involved.

### **5 - Stick with your plan.**

As you follow your plan, you will begin to pay off your debts. Every time a debt is paid in full, mark that debt off your list. There is a tremendous value to you in paying off your debts. You are obeying God, and God will bless you for it.

Settle one thing in your mind: *Never run away from your debts.* It is not a disgrace to owe a debt, but it is a disgrace to evade an honest obligation. A Christian can never justify his failure to honestly face up to his obligations. Running away from your debts is not only dishonest, but it will also cause you to lose your self-respect and the respect of others as well.

## **Getting Our Priorities Right**

Making money is not the purpose of life. The world measures success by how much money or possessions a man has, but this is not the true measure of success. Jesus said,

*"...a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Luke 12:15*

Jesus Himself gave us the way to true success. It is so simple that we can easily overlook it. Here is what the Lord said,

*"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew 6:33*

To seek *"first the kingdom of God"* means to put God and His interests first in our life. To seek *"His righteousness"* means that we seek with all our heart to be what God wants us to be.

There are some very practical ways by which we can show that we are truly putting God first in our life:

- 1. Give God the first hour of each day.**
- 2. Give God the first day of each week.**
- 3. Give God the first part of each dollar we receive.**
- 4. Give God first place in our home.**
- 5. Give God first place in our habits.**

If we truly put God and His interests first in our life, we have His word that He will provide our needs. If we have God and what He provides, we have all that we really need. Paul said,

*"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing with these we shall be content."*  
*1 Timothy 6:6-8*

**Discovered Gem:** True success comes from putting God first in our life.

**Questions:**

1. God owns everything. How so?
2. How can we serve God and, at the same time, make money our goal in life?
3. Does God entrust us with more money based on how we handled the smaller amount we had first?
4. Is it a sin to co-sign a note for a friend?
5. What is wrong with making a purchase under the pressure of sales talk?
6. When does true success come?
7. Money gives people a sense of power and importance, and it offers real security. True or False?
8. Rather than asking where your money went, what should you do to manage money properly?

9. You may have money on hand, but if you owe someone else, the amount that you have is not rightfully yours. Is this statement true? Explain

10. Why should you never run away from your debts?